

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An information intermediary apparatus for communicating through a communication network with an information management apparatus having user information stored therein, the information intermediary apparatus comprising:

a first communication section for establishing communication through the communication network with the information management apparatus;

a second communication section for communicating with a portable communication apparatus having identification information for identifying a user;

an identification information-obtaining section, connected with said second communication section, for obtaining said identification information from said portable communication apparatus through said second communication section;

a user information input unit, connected with said first communication section, for inputting user information for the user of the portable communication apparatus; and

a data-identifying section, connected with said identification information-obtaining section and said user information input unit, for associating said identification information with the user information.

2. The information intermediary apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said user information input unit includes at least one of:

an operations unit for inputting a profile of the user;

a microphone for inputting voice data of the user;

and

an image-capturing unit for inputting an image of the user, and

said data-identifying section associates said profile with said identification information for the user.

3. The information intermediary apparatus as claimed in claim 2, wherein:

said first communication section sends at least one of said image, said voice data, and said profile to the information management apparatus as the user information, with a recognizable association with said identification information for the user.

4. The information intermediary apparatus as claimed in claim 2, further comprising:

an open contents-designating section for designating among said identification information, said image, said voice data, and said profile contents that are to be disclosed.

5. The information intermediary apparatus as claimed in claim 2, wherein:

said second communication section sends said image of the user to said portable communication apparatus of the user, said image being used as wallpaper for said portable communication apparatus.

6. The information intermediary apparatus as claimed in claim 2, further comprising:

a voice data-identifying section for associating said voice data of the user with said identification information.

7. The information intermediary apparatus as claimed in claim 6, wherein:

said image-capturing unit inputs an image of a group user including a plurality of users,

said operations unit inputs a profile of the group user, and

said data-identifying section associates said image of the

group user with said profile of the group user.

8. The information intermediary apparatus as claimed in claim 7, wherein:

said voice data-identifying section associates said voice data with said profile of the group user.

9. The information intermediary apparatus as claimed in claim 7, wherein:

said second communication section communicates with a plurality of said portable communication apparatus of the group user,

said identification information-obtaining section obtains said identification information from each user of the group user, and

said data-identifying section associates said image with said identification information of each user.

10. The information intermediary apparatus as claimed in claim 9, further comprising:

an instruction section for instructing each user of the group user to lineup in an order corresponding to an order of said identification information of each user of the group user.

11. The information intermediary apparatus as claimed in claim 10, further comprising:

a portable communication apparatus receiving section for receiving and connecting with at least one of said portable communication apparatus, wherein:

said second communication section communicates with said at least one portable communication apparatus through said portable communication apparatus receiving section, and

said instruction section instructs the user to lineup in an order corresponding to a position of said at least one portable

communication apparatus.

12. The information intermediary apparatus as claimed in claim 9, wherein:

said data-identifying section associates a profile of each user of the group user with said identification information corresponding to said each user.

13. The information intermediary apparatus as claimed in claim 2, wherein:

said operations unit accepts a designation of user information of registered users to obtain from the information management apparatus, and

further comprising:

a user information-obtaining section for obtaining said designated user information for a registered user from the information management apparatus; and

a printer for printing said profile and said image, included in said designated user information obtained by said user information-obtaining section.

14. The information intermediary apparatus as claimed in claim 13, further comprising:

a transmission section for notifying, through said information management apparatus, said portable communication apparatus of the registered user that said designated user information of the registered user has been printed, when said printer has printed said profile and said image.

15. The information intermediary apparatus as claimed in claim 14, wherein:

said operations unit accepts from a browsing user input of return information, which is to be sent to said portable communication apparatus of the registered user, and

said transmission section sends to the information management apparatus information showing that said return information is to be sent from the browsing user to said portable communication apparatus of the registered user.

16. The information intermediary apparatus as claimed in claim 13, further comprising:

a paying capacity information-obtaining section for obtaining information relating to a paying capacity of a browsing user from the information management apparatus, using said identification information of said browsing user; and

a judgment section that judges whether or not to provide a service to the browsing user, based on said information relating to said paying capacity,

wherein said printer prints said image when said judgment section judges to provide said service.

17. The information intermediary apparatus as claimed in claim 16, further comprising:

a rate-storing section for storing a rate of said service;

a charge amount-deciding section for deciding an amount to charge for said service based on a number of browsing users and said rate stored in said rate-storing section,

wherein said first communication section sends to the information management apparatus said charge amount, decided by said charge amount-deciding section with corresponding identification information, as charge information.

18. The information intermediary apparatus as claimed in claim 17, further comprising:

a redcision instruction section for instructing said charge amount-deciding section to recalculate said charge amount, based on a number of browsing users said judgment section has judged to provide said service, when there is at least one browsing user

said judgment section has judged not to provide said service.

19. The information intermediary apparatus as claimed in claim 17, wherein:

said charge amount-deciding section obtains a share burden ratio for said rate of said service for each of said browsing users and decides said amount to charge for said service for each of said browsing users, based on said share burden ratio and said rate stored in said rate-storing section.

20. The information intermediary apparatus as claimed in claim 17, further comprising:

a user information output section for outputting said user information obtained by said user information-obtaining section when said judgment section judges to provide said service.

21. The information intermediary apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said identification information includes a phone number of said portable communication apparatus.

22. An information management apparatus for receiving from an information intermediary apparatus, through a communication network, information relating to a registered user who is registered at the information intermediary apparatus and storing the received user information, the information management apparatus comprising:

a receiving section for receiving information relating to:

user identification information obtained from a portable communication apparatus connected to the information intermediary apparatus; and

user information relating to the registered user registered at the information intermediary apparatus, by communicating with the information intermediary

apparatus;

a storing section for storing the user identification information and the user information associated with said user identification information;

a search condition-accepting section connected with the information intermediary apparatus through said receiving section, said search condition-accepting section accepts from a browsing user a search condition for searching the user information of the registered user stored in said storing section;

a retrieving section connected with said storing section and said search condition-accepting section for retrieving from said storing section user information that satisfies said search condition; and

a transmission section connected with said receiving section and said retrieving section for sending the user information retrieved by said retrieving section to the information intermediary apparatus through said receiving section.

23. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 22, further comprising:

an open contents-retrieving section for retrieving contents that are designated open contents to be disclosed among said information retrieved by said retrieving section,

wherein said transmission section sends to the information intermediary apparatus said open contents retrieved by said open contents-retrieving section.

24. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 22, wherein:

said transmission section sends said information stored in said storing section to one or more users through the communication network.

25. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 22,

wherein:

said receiving section receives designation of open contents that are to be disclosed among said information stored in said storing section.

26. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 22, wherein:

said storing section stores data of the browsing user, and further comprising:

a portable communication apparatus communication section for sending to the portable communication apparatus of the registered user said data of the browsing user, when said search condition-accepting section accepts from the browsing user said search condition and said retrieving section retrieves the user information of the registered user.

27. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 26, wherein:

said storing section stores an image of a group user including a plurality of users and a profile of the group user, by associating said image with said profile of the group user, when at least one of said receiving section and said portable communication apparatus communication section receives said image of the group user and said profile of the group user.

28. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 27, wherein:

said storing section stores said image of the group user and identification information of each user of the group user, by associating said image with said identification information of each user of the group user, when at least one of said receiving section and said portable communication apparatus communication section receives said identification information of each user of the group user.

29. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 27, wherein:

said at least one of said receiving section and said portable communication apparatus communication section receives position information showing a position of each user in said image of the group user, and

said storing section stores said position information.

30. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 27, further comprising:

a monitoring section for deleting at least one of said image and said profile stored in said storing section associated with identification information of the user, when at least one of said receiving section and said portable communication apparatus communication section receives another one of said at least one of said image and said profile already stored in said storing section.

31. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 26, further comprising:

an advertisement-storing section for storing a distribution condition defined as a condition to be satisfied by an advertisement and a target audience for a distribution of said advertisement;

a concordance degree-calculating section for obtaining from said storing section user information of the browsing user and calculating a concordance degree for each advertisement stored in said advertisement-storing section; and

a setting value-storing section for storing a setting value, which is a smallest value possible for said concordance degree when said advertisement is distributed,

wherein at least one of said transmission section and said portable communication apparatus communication section retrieves from said advertisement-storing section each advertisement having

a value of said concordance degree not less than said setting value, and distributes to the browsing user said retrieved advertisement with the user information retrieved by said retrieving section.

32. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 31, wherein:

at least one of said transmission section and said portable communication apparatus communication section distributes an advertisement with a smaller number of distribution records, when there is more than one advertisement having a value of said concordance degree not less than said setting value.

33. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 31, wherein:

at least one of said transmission section and said portable communication apparatus communication section distributes an advertisement with a smaller number of distribution records as well as having a greater setting value, when there is more than one advertisement having a value of said concordance degree not less than said setting value.

34. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 31, further comprising:

an advertisement fee-calculating section for calculating an advertisement fee based on a basic fee and said setting value.

35. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 31, wherein:

said portable communication apparatus communication section retrieves a predetermined item from an advertisement stored in said advertisement-storing section and distributes the retrieved item to a first communication apparatus of said target audience for distributing said advertisement, and

said transmission section obtains said advertisement from

said advertisement-storing section and distributes said obtained advertisement to a second communication apparatus, different from said first communication apparatus.

36. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 35, further comprising:

a non-advertisement information-storing section for storing one or more pieces of non-advertisement information; and

a simple information-creating section for retrieving a predetermined item from each of said one or more pieces of non-advertisement information and creating one or more pieces of simple information.

37. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 36, wherein:

said portable communication apparatus communication section distributes to said first communication apparatus said retrieved predetermined item of said advertisement with one or more pieces of said simple information.

38. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 36, wherein:

said transmission section distributes to said second communication apparatus all items of said advertisement with one or more pieces of said non-advertisement information.

39. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 36, wherein:

said first communication apparatus includes a portable communication apparatus.

40. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 36, wherein:

said second communication apparatus includes a

communication apparatus operable to print said advertisement.

41. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 36, wherein:

said simple information-creating section creates area information showing an area to which the user belongs, as said simple information.

42. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 41, wherein:

said simple information-creating section creates information showing a place where the registered user registered the user information, as said area information.

43. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 26, further comprising:

a position information-obtaining section for obtaining position information for said portable communication apparatus showing in which area said portable communication apparatus is positioned, when said portable communication apparatus communication section communicates with said portable communication apparatus; and

an information intermediary apparatus search section for searching for an information intermediary apparatus located at a nearest area to said area shown by said position information for said portable communication apparatus, based on said position information obtained by said position information-obtaining section,

wherein said portable communication apparatus communication section sends to said portable communication apparatus information relating to a position of the information intermediary apparatus searched by said information intermediary apparatus search section.

44. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 22, wherein:

the user information includes a phone number of said portable communication apparatus of the registered user, and

said transmission section notifies said portable communication apparatus of the registered user, corresponding to the retrieved user information, that the user information has been sent, when the user information of the registered user is sent to the information intermediary apparatus.

45. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 26, wherein:

said portable communication apparatus communication section sends user information of the browsing user to said portable communication apparatus of the registered user, only when said storing section previously stores the user information of the browsing user that corresponds to identification information of said browsing user.

46. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 22, further comprising:

a statistical information-creating section for creating user statistical information relating to the registered user, based on the user information; and

an advertiser communication section for sending said user statistical information to an advertiser who distributes advertisement to the registered user.

47. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 46, further comprising:

a distribution statistics-creating section for creating distribution user statistical information relating to the user to whom advertisement is sent, said distribution user statistical information being associated with said advertisement, when at least

one of said portable communication apparatus communication section and said transmission section sends said advertisement to the user, wherein said advertiser communication section sends said distribution user statistical information to said advertiser.

48. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 22, further comprising:

an identification information-obtaining section for simultaneously obtaining from the information intermediary apparatus more than one identification information for identifying more than one browsing user who tries to use a service;

a charge amount database for storing a charge amount to charge the browsing user, by associating with said identification information for the browsing user;

a rate-storing section for storing a rate of said service;

a charge amount-deciding section for deciding said charge amount for each browsing user, based on the number of said identification information corresponding to said browsing user obtained by said identification information-obtaining section and said rate stored in said rate-storing section; and

a charge amount-storing section for storing said charge amount decided by said charge amount-deciding section in said charge amount database by associating with said corresponding identification information of said browsing user.

49. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 48, further comprising:

a paying capacity information-obtaining section for obtaining information relating to a paying capacity of each browsing user by using said corresponding identification information;

a judgment section for judging whether or not to provide said service based on said information relating to said paying capacity; and

a redecision instruction section for making said charge amount-deciding section recalculate said charge amount based on the number of said identification information corresponding to the browsing user to whom said judgment section has judged to provide the service, when there is at least one said identification information to which said judgment section has refused to provide said service.

50. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 49, wherein:

said charge amount-deciding section obtains a share burden ratio for said rate of said service for each of said identification information corresponding to the browsing user obtained by said identification information-obtaining section, and decides said charge amount for said service with respect to each of said identification information, based on said share burden ratio and said rate stored in said rate-storing section.

51. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 50, wherein:

said redecision instruction section makes said charge amount-deciding section reobtain said share burden ratio and recalculate said charge amount, when there is at least one of said identification information to which said judgment section has refused to provide said service.

52. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 22, further comprising:

a consideration amount-storing section for storing a consideration amount to pay the registered user of the user information when the user information is used for providing a service;

a sum of considerations database for storing a sum of said consideration amount, said sum of said consideration amount being

associated with said identification information of the registered user; and

a consideration amount-deciding section for deciding the amount of consideration to be distributed to the registered user, identified by said identification information, whose user information is used for providing the service, based on the number of browsing users associated with the retrieved user information and said consideration amount stored in said consideration amount-storing section, when the user information is used for providing said service; wherein

said sum of considerations database stores said consideration amount decided by said consideration amount-deciding section, and said consideration amount is associated with said identification information of the registered user.

53. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 52, further comprising:

an item-storing section for storing an item to be used for said service among items included in the user information,

wherein said consideration amount-deciding section decides said consideration amount to be distributed to each registered user identified by said identification information based on the quantity of said items stored in said item-storing section.

54. The information management apparatus as claimed in claim 22, wherein:

said identification information includes a phone number of said portable communication apparatus.

55. An information communication system for communicating user information through a communication network, comprising:

(a) an information intermediary apparatus for sending the user information, including:

a first communication section for establishing communication with an information management apparatus through the communication network;

a second communication section for communicating with a portable communication apparatus having identification information for identifying a user stored therein;

an identification information-obtaining section connected with said second communication section for obtaining said identification information from said portable communication apparatus through said second communication section;

a user information input unit connected with said first communication section for inputting user information; and

a data-identifying section connected with said identification information-obtaining section and said user information input unit for associating said identification information with the user information; and

(b) an information management apparatus for receiving and storing the user information, including:

a receiving section for receiving information relating to user identification information obtained from a portable communication apparatus connected to the information intermediary apparatus and user information for a registered user registered at the information intermediary apparatus, by communicating with the information intermediary apparatus;

a storing section for storing said user identification information and the user information associated with said user identification information;

a search condition-accepting section connected with the information intermediary apparatus, through said receiving section, for accepting from a browsing user a search condition for searching the user information of the registered user stored in said storing section;

a retrieving section connected with said storing section and said search condition-accepting section for retrieving

from said storing section user information that satisfies said search condition; and

a transmission section connected with said receiving section and said retrieving section for sending the user information retrieved by said retrieving section to the information intermediary apparatus through said receiving section.

56. A method for intermediating information with an information management apparatus, which stores user information, through a communication network, the method comprising:

- (a) establishing communication with the information management apparatus through the communication network;
- (b) communicating with a portable communication apparatus, which stores identification information for identifying a user;
- (c) obtaining said identification information from said portable communication apparatus by said communicating with the portable communication apparatus;
- (d) inputting user information; and
- (e) associating said identification information with the user information.

57. The method for intermediating information as claimed in claim 56, further comprising:

obtaining information relating to a paying capacity of a browsing user from the information management apparatus, using said identification information; and

judging whether or not to provide the browsing user a service, based on said information relating to said paying capacity of the browsing user, and

printing user information only when said judging whether or not to provide the service judges to provide said service.

58. The method for intermediating information as claimed in claim 57, further comprising:

storing a rate of said service;

deciding an amount to charge for said service to each browsing user, based on a number of said browsing user and said rate of said service.

59. The method for intermediating information as claimed in claim 58, further comprising:

recalculating said charge amount, based on the number of said browsing user to whom said judging whether or not to provide the service has judged to provide said service, when there is at least one browsing user to whom said judging whether or not to provide the service has judged not to provide said service.

60. The method for intermediating information as claimed in claim 58, wherein:

said deciding an amount to charge includes:

obtaining a share burden ratio for said rate of said service with respect to each of said browsing user and deciding said amount to charge for said service to each of said browsing user, based on said share burden ratio and said stored rate.

61. A method for managing information relating to a registered user, who is registered at an information intermediary apparatus, said user information being received from the information intermediary apparatus through a communication network, and storing the received user information, the method comprising:

(a) receiving information relating to user identification information obtained from a portable communication apparatus connected to the information intermediary apparatus and user information relating to said registered user registered at the information intermediary apparatus, by communicating with the information intermediary apparatus;

(b) storing said user identification information and the user information associated with said user identification

information;

(c) accepting from a browsing user a search condition for searching the stored user information of the registered user ;

(d) retrieving stored user information that satisfies said search condition; and

(e) sending the retrieved user information to the information intermediary apparatus.

62. The method for managing information as claimed in claim 61, further comprising:

storing a distribution condition, defined as a condition to be satisfied by an advertisement and a target audience for distribution of an advertisement;

obtaining user information of the browsing user and calculating a concordance degree for each said advertisement;

storing a setting value, which is a smallest value possible for said concordance degree when said advertisement is distributed; and

retrieving said advertisement having a value of said concordance degree not less than said setting value and distributing said advertisement to the browsing user with the retrieved user information.

63. The method for managing information as claimed in claim 62, further comprising:

simultaneously obtaining from the information intermediary apparatus more than one identification information for identifying more than one browsing user who tries to use a service;

storing a charge amount to charge the browsing user, by associating with said identification information;

storing a rate of said service;

deciding said charge amount for each of said identification information, based on the number of said identification information obtained by said obtaining and said rate stored in said storing;

and

storing said charge amount from said deciding by associating with each of said identification information.

64. The method for managing information as claimed in claim 63, further comprising:

obtaining information relating to a paying capacity of the browsing user by using said identification information;

judging whether or not to provide said service based on said information relating to said paying capacity; and

making said charge amount-deciding section recalculate said charge amount based on the number of said identification information judged to be provided said service, when there is at least one of said identification information judged not to be provided said service.

65. The method for managing information as claimed in claim 63, further comprising :

obtaining a share burden ratio for said rate of said service for each of said identification information; and

deciding said amount to charge for said service for each of said identification information, based on said share burden ratio and said stored rate.

66. The method for managing information as claimed in claim 65, further comprising:

recalculating said share burden ratio and said charge amount, when there is at least one of said identification information judged not to be provided said service.